



**EDUCATION QUALITY
ASSURANCE UNIT**
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

Inspection Report

May 2013

Cayman Brac Day Care Centre

Preface

The inspection of the educational aspects of Early Childhood Care and Education Centres and Reception classes is now the remit of the Education Quality Assurance Unit. These inspections will be carried out on a two year cycle, with a progress check approximately six months after the inspection.

The main aspects that will be reported on are:

- Leadership and management, including how effectively leaders and managers:
 - ensure the welfare, health and safety of the children
 - lead the direction for development and learning
 - manage the centre and staff and link with parents and external agencies

- The effectiveness of provision, including teaching, and its impact on children's learning and development, including the development of the following four key focus areas of the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework:
 - Well-being
 - Respect
 - Communication
 - Exploration

The criteria for inspection have been circulated to all centres and primary schools, and these include some indicators of good practice. Centres have also been asked to complete a self-evaluation form which will be taken into account as part of the evidence gathering for the inspection.

Inspectors use the following grading scale to describe aspects of the work of the centre / reception class:

Grade	Judgement	Description
1	Very good	Good in nearly all aspects and exemplary in some significant areas
2	Good	Good in most respects. Weaknesses are minor and not in significant areas
3	Adequate	No significant weaknesses, but no major strengths. Improvement needed
4	Unsatisfactory	Some significant weaknesses (might be only one or two) that have a negative impact on children's learning and progress. Cause for concern

Reports will be published on the Ministry's website www.education.gov.ky.

They will provide the centres, parents, the community and the Ministry of Education with an external and impartial inspection of the work of the centres.

The Education Quality Assurance Unit expects that this inspection report will prove helpful and will contribute in a positive way to improvement.

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Education Quality Assurance Unit

Background

The foundation a child receives in the early years of life is an indicator of future development and success. The provision of services at Early Childhood Care and Education Centres (ECCEC) has a large impact on the future of the child academically, socially and cognitively. It is important that quality interactions with adults and peers, as well as opportunities for exploration, problem solving and reflection occur consistently.

Early Childhood Care and Education is provided by both private and government sectors. In 2012, the Ministry of Education, Financial Services and Employment added seven new Reception classes in primary schools in Grand Cayman, which cater for children aged between four and five years old. However, the great majority of provision for young children is in private centres. Around forty private centres are currently in operation, providing an important service to families. Around 1,700 babies and children up to the age of five are being cared for and educated.

Building “a world-class early childhood care and education system” (Strategic Goal 2, Cayman Islands Strategic Plan for Education 2012-2017) will help ensure that children have the best opportunities to develop as life-long learners who are able to contribute positively to their community. Along with other stakeholders the Ministry of Education’s Early Childhood Care and Education Unit is working to “provide access to high quality early childhood care and education to all children, regardless of income, background, special or additional education need” (Cayman Islands Strategic Plan for Education 2012-2017).

In an effort to improve the quality of provision, private early childhood care and education centres benefit from professional advice, support and training by the Ministry’s team and the Education Quality Assurance Unit identified areas for improvement.

The report for this inspection will be used as a basis for discussion and will be published on the Ministry’s website. The centre is expected to take careful note of the recommendations at the end of the report and to prepare an action plan to address these. There will be subsequent visits by Ministry personnel from the Early Childhood Care and Education Unit to provide support.

General Information about the Centre

Address	296 Ashton Reid Drive, The Bluff, Cayman Brac, KY2-2101
Telephone numbers	948-2672
Email address	Neila.Jones@gov.ky
Name of owner	Cayman Islands Government
Supervisor	Mrs Neila Jones
Age range	Birth – 4 years
Number on roll	Total = 58 (32 boys, 26 girls) Below 12 months - 6 1 year old - 18 2 years old - 17 3 years old - 15 4 years old - 2

- The Cayman Brac Day Care Centre has been in operation for many years. Originally it served workers from the District Administration Building, but gradually opened its doors to the wider community. The centre moved to its new location on The Bluff in 2011.
- All administrative actions regarding hiring of staff, staff welfare, discipline and general management are carried out by the district administration personnel. Parents pay school fees directly to the District Administration Building.
- There are currently 58 children at the centre, from ages seven weeks to four years. Two children have special needs. None are learning English as an additional language. The majority of the children (49) are Caymanian.
- There are 12 members of staff, ten full-time and two part-time. All are Caymanian.
- The centre has never been inspected before.

Leadership and management

Inspectors consider the extent to which the impact of leadership of learning improves outcomes for children and the efficiency of day-to-day management.

Ensuring the welfare, health and safety of the children

- The supervisor is very committed to the welfare of children and to improving the centre. She has several concerns, including the quality of support provided by the owners. She has spearheaded the development of a handbook for staff and parents, which includes health and safety procedures and guidelines for the operation of the centre.
- The centre is very clean and the classrooms are spacious, with enough room for children to move around. However, the space could be used more efficiently if areas were better defined, and with easier access to materials. Resources are not stored safely.
- The centre has conducted few fire drills but initiated by a whistle rather than the fire alarm. Environmental Health Department visits regularly to check on fire extinguishers, water quality, and smoke detectors and the Food Premises team visit annually to confirm the centre's meal service is conducted safely. However, records of visits are poorly maintained.
- The centre provides healthy meals for the children, and parents are advised to serve healthy meals at home. Children and staff are encouraged to wash their hands regularly and to dispose of waste safely.
- The playground is well resourced with a wide range of equipment to stimulate children's imaginations and develop their gross motor skills well. Children are excited as they play in the sand box, climb, ride toys, slide and get pushed in trollies. They have easy access to safe drinking water and are supervised well.

Leading the direction for development and learning

- Although it has no written vision or mission statement, the centre runs smoothly as staff know the daily routines well. Supply staff are usually available to cover for any staff absences.
- Basic policies, for example 'Teaching and Learning,' have not been drawn up and there is no clear accountability for staff. Performance management is carried out by district administration personnel.
- Although the supervisor visits classes regularly and assists where necessary, there is no system for effective monitoring of teaching and learning. Information is not always recorded. The principal stated that the system for tracking children's progress and performance was discontinued. Currently, teachers report to parents verbally each day.
- The supervisor has encouraged staff to attend professional development training by the Early Childhood Care and Education Unit (ECCEU). An ECCEU officer visits the school regularly to provide training and observe classes. Some staff are becoming familiar with the curriculum and how to plan for its use.
- Children with special needs have been accurately identified and they are well supported by the Early Intervention team during their weekly visits.

Management of the centre and staff

- Apart from performance appraisals carried out by the district administration personnel and the regular reminders about their responsibilities from the supervisor, staff are not monitored closely enough.
- Some teachers plan lessons using the ECCEU curriculum framework and have received appropriate support and training. Aspects of the planning need further development, for example, using 'learning stories' as a way of tracking progress and reporting to parents.
- The centre does not provide children with enough opportunities to explore the world around them, play imaginatively, capture experiences through art, movement, music and songs, or develop their language and critical thinking skills, or gross and fine motor skills. Classrooms have a limited range of age-appropriate resources and walls are practically bare. Children do not have a stimulating enough environment and have restricted opportunities to explore, for example by using a variety of media and tools to express themselves. Small group activities are too infrequent, only happening when the dining area is vacant.

Links with parents and external agencies

- The centre has established good links with parents and outside agencies. All parents have received an earlier version of the parent handbook. The revised version will be ready for September. The centre provides some training sessions for parents.
- Parents give good support to the work of the school. They help with raising funds for various projects and are involved in the parent-night activities, such as reading to the children or watching a movie with them. Parents sign their children in and out daily, and contact details are well recorded and easily accessible.

The leadership and management of the Cayman Brac Day Care Centre are unsatisfactory. There are no systems in place to monitor the work of the centre and the supervisor has limited authority in running the school. Policies and guidelines for the operation of the school and management of staff are not in place. Staff are not held accountable enough for the work they are hired to do.

Effectiveness of provision, including teaching and its impact on children's learning and development

Well-being

Inspectors consider the extent to which each setting provides a safe environment that actively promotes a well-balanced and healthy lifestyle that enriches social and emotional development, and encourages resilience and self-confidence.

- The building is secure. Staff are friendly and caring so that most children feel safe and settle easily when they arrive each day. In some groups children's independence is fostered through leadership opportunities, for example, passing out papers and leading the singing.
- The current provision for children two years and under, including a seven-week old baby, is inadequate. They are accommodated in the main entrance to the building where there is too much traffic exposing young children to noise and disruption. All personal care, including feeding, is done in the entrance area. Babies have to be held by adults for long periods until they calm down. Conditions are not hygienic enough as babies crawl and walk with uncovered feet across the floor where staff and visitors have walked with outside shoes.
- Toddlers, up to two years, have few opportunities to explore and share because of the lack of space and safety issues caused by the playpens. Lessons are not well planned or monitored to ensure that children are learning, and resources for developing creativity and an enquiring mind are limited. For example, behaviour seen in a circle-time session was unsatisfactory and very little teaching or learning took place.

Respect

Inspectors consider the extent to which each setting provides an environment that lends itself to both guided and spontaneous interactions that enable children to develop an appreciation of themselves and the world around them.

- Children are aware of and have respect for religion. They participate willingly in devotion, singing and saying prayers. Teachers encourage them to be polite and have good manners. They are taught to respect the environment, for example when they are encouraged to clean up after themselves.
- Children are learning how to be polite and respectful to each other. They are quick to help each other. A few children need to be continually reminded of the limits of acceptable behaviour.

Communication

Inspectors consider the extent to which each setting provides a safe and supportive environment which will foster and enrich children's ability to listen and respond to others and to clearly express their own ideas, thoughts and feelings.

- Children learn sounds and participate in singing songs in a lively manner. They like to talk about stories they have read and always enjoy adults reading to them. The limited resources do not allow them to explore enough and they have too few opportunities for mark-making, writing and story-telling.
- Children lack opportunities to develop fine motor skills, particularly the younger ones, where most mark-making activities only involve colouring. Their cutting, tearing and pasting skills are not developed well. Children will find it more difficult to grip and manipulate pencils efficiently.

Exploration

Inspectors consider the extent to which teachers' planning and delivery of learning activities and the way in which they organise and manage their environments lead to effective learning for all children. In particular how does the curriculum and teaching enable children to develop in the key focus areas?

- Children have good opportunities to develop gross motor skills as they use the wide range of outdoor resources. They move with increasing coordination and balance as they ride, push and pull the toys and climb outdoor equipment. There are fewer opportunities indoors to develop investigation skills and make independent choices.
- The children have participated in many educational trips which help them to make sense of the world around them. They are learning letter sounds and participate in singing a variety of songs.

The effectiveness of provision, including teaching and its impact on children's learning and development, is unsatisfactory. The experiences that children have in the classroom do not help them to learn and develop skills well enough. There are too few stimulating resources, teaching is ineffective and classrooms are poorly organized. Children's learning is further hindered by inadequate tracking of their progress. The building is spacious, clean and safe, and staff are warm and caring.

Recommendations (These are the priority areas for development)

In order to improve further, the owner and supervisor need to:

1. As a matter of urgency, improve the provision for the youngest children, by, for example, providing a quieter area that is not used as a thoroughfare and is more conducive to babies' stimulation, growth and development.
2. Ensure that policies and procedures are written and communicated to all stakeholders, in order to monitor and evaluate the work of the school and outline the expectations and responsibilities of staff.
3. Improve the quantity and quality of resources in all classrooms.
4. Ensure all teachers are familiar with the Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework and know how to use it in their planning and for reporting children's progress.
5. Develop a system to monitor the planning of lessons, to track students' progress and to provide written reports to parents.

Action Plan

The Centre is expected to develop an action plan to address the areas for improvement identified above. The action plan must be sent to the Education Quality Assurance Unit within 40 working days of receiving the inspection report. The Centre is required to provide parents with an update on the progress being made in addressing the areas identified as needing to improve.

The action plan is due on December 6th, 2013.

